

# Word Stories

**tantalize**  
**tulle**

**boulevard**  
**nucleus**

**poinsettia**  
**flamingo**

**mercurial**  
**blazer**

**coward**  
**magnolia**



**MANY WORDS HAVE INTERESTING STORIES ABOUT THEIR ORIGINS.**

If you **tantalize** someone, you torment that person.

A **boulevard** is a wide avenue.

Someone who is **mercurial** is quick and changeable.

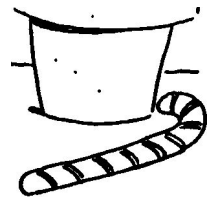
A **coward** is someone who lacks courage.

**Tulle** is a fine net used in veils and women's clothes.

A **nucleus** is the core of a cell and controls its growth.

A **flamingo** is a large bird with bright pink feathers.

A **blazer** is a type of jacket. / A **magnolia** is a kind of tree with large flowers.



A **poinsettia** is a plant often used as a holiday decoration.

**A. Write a vocabulary word for each word story.**

1. Sailors aboard the British ship *Blazer* wore a new kind of coat.
2. Long ago in France, the tops of ramparts called *bolouarts* were used as places to walk.
3. Coart was a timid hare in an old French fable about Reynard the Fox.
4. The Latin word *nux* means "kernel."
5. A fine open-meshed silk was first made in Thlle, France.
6. The Latin word *flamma* means flame.

**B. Draw a line from each vocabulary word to the person associated with the word.**

1. **magnolia**

a. The Roman god Mercury was known for speed.

2. **mercurial**

b. J.R. Poinsett, a U.S. ambassador to Mexico, brought a plant with him when he returned to his homeland.

3. **poinsettia**

c. Tantalus, a Greek god, was punished in an unusual way.

4. **tantalize**

d. Pierre Magnol was a French botanist.

## Word Stories

tantalize	boulevard	poinsettia	mercurial	coward
tulle	nucleus	flamingo	blazer	magnolia

### A. Use what you know. Write the best word to complete each sentence.

- The city of Paris is known for its wide \_\_\_\_\_.
- The fantastic \_\_\_\_\_ is a southern bird with a long neck and legs.
- Muriel didn't want the others to think she was a \_\_\_\_\_, so she walked across the rope bridge.
- Every once in a while, a breeze would \_\_\_\_\_ us with the promise of cool air during the heat wave.
- The ballerina wore a tutu with a \_\_\_\_\_ skirt.
- In the spring, the blossoms on a \_\_\_\_\_ tree perfume the air.
- Zack wasn't entirely comfortable with Andrew because of his \_\_\_\_\_ temperament.
- Many of the men at the summer party wore blue \_\_\_\_\_.
- Without a \_\_\_\_\_, a cell cannot divide.
- Every Christmas, florists sell hundreds of red \_\_\_\_\_ plants.

### B. Read each question. Choose the best answer.

- |                                 |                                |                                |                               |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Which one has wings?         | <input type="radio"/> flamingo | <input type="radio"/> flamenco | <input type="radio"/> flannel |
| 2. What might a boulevard have? | <input type="radio"/> turret   | <input type="radio"/> tulle    | <input type="radio"/> traffic |
| 3. Which one has sleeves?       | <input type="radio"/> vest     | <input type="radio"/> leotard  | <input type="radio"/> blazer  |
| 4. What might a coward do?      | <input type="radio"/> hide     | <input type="radio"/> fight    | <input type="radio"/> attack  |

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## Writing to Learn

Find out more about the story behind two of the vocabulary words.  
Write a report about the words.